

COUNTY COUNCIL

18 JULY 2017

Motion arising from the meeting of the

Community Safety and Waste Management Cabinet Panel – 13 July 2017

THE POTENTIAL TRANSFER OF GOVERNANCE OF HERTFORDSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE FROM HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TO THE POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER

1. The Community Safety & Waste Management Cabinet Panel recommends that Cabinet resolves to oppose Police & Crime Commissioner's proposal to become the Fire & Rescue Authority for Hertfordshire on the following grounds:

- (a) That the Local Business Case does not make a convincing case for transfer and contains a number of contradictions, overly optimistic assumptions that are not supported by evidence, and a number of financial inaccuracies and misunderstandings.*
- (b) That under the current arrangements, cost-effective 'back office' support for the Service is provided by the County Council, thereby maximising resources available front line service delivery. Establishing a separate 'back office' for the Fire & Rescue Service would undermine the economy and efficiency of the current arrangements.*
- (c) That, as an integral part of the County Council's suite of services, the Fire & Rescue Service draws on its strong and trusted reputation to contribute to a number of cross-service agendas, working in close partnership with Public Health, Adult Social Care, Children's Services and Environment and also with Hertfordshire Constabulary. The loss of these joint activities would be to the detriment of public safety in Hertfordshire.*
- (d) That the current arrangements for accountability of governance of the Fire & Rescue Service are robust with party-political challenge and scrutiny of performance and policy developments through a comprehensive member*

process. This accountability and transparency of decision-making will be lost if governance is transferred to the Commissioner.

- 2. Notwithstanding its strong concerns about the Local Business Case, the Cabinet Panel recognises the extensive collaborative work between Fire Service & Rescue Service and the Constabulary which the County Council is committed to maintain and enhance.*

It also recognises that the Police and Crime Act 2017 offers a number of options to promote the Government's policy objectives. Among these is the 'Representative' model which would enhance collaboration and representation, without incurring the disruption, costs and ongoing inefficiency arising from the 'Governance' model and which would still maintain and advance the important collaborative work between the Fire & Rescue Service and the Constabulary.

- 3. The Panel recommends to Cabinet that it:*

- a. Agrees that the County Council should respond to the Police and Crime Commissioner's consultation, opposing the Police and Crime Commissioner's proposal to become the Fire & Rescue Authority for Hertfordshire;*
- b. Supports the 'Representative' model of governance for the Fire & Rescue Authority;*
- c. Delegates to the Director of Resources, in consultation with the Executive Members for Community Safety & Waste Management and for Resources, Property & the Economy, authority to finalise the response to the consultation.*